

# THE WIVES

Saturday, March 4, 1871.



"It is impossible, Sir Gilbert Mottram"—p. 339.

## JOHN HESKETH'S CHARGE.

BY ALTON CLYDE, AUTHOR OF "UNDER FOOT," ETC. ETC.

### CHAPTER LIV.—THE PROPOSAL.

THERE was a dinner-party at Lowfield, consisting of the worthy rector and one or two other gentlemen residing in the neighbourhood; also the Walfords, who brought Sir Gilbert Mottram in their train. The baronet had shown considerable anxiety for an introduction to the relatives of Miss Arden. Thanks to his accommodating friends, this desire had been gratified, and he had been received as a visitor

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at Lowfield, where his affable manners and natural tact succeeded in making him a general favourite. The Walford circle did not fail to attach significance to the fact of his unexpected return to the neighbourhood, and the sudden partiality which he evinced for their busy provincial town, which was not usually successful in winning any admiring appreciation from strangers. He showed an inclination to linger in that locality, and was constantly discovering new attractions to justify the preference; but this did not deceive his friends, they smiled and drew their own inference, making Caroline Arden responsible for all.

They were right. He had formed an attachment which seemed to be daily growing upon him. Whether it was returned by Caroline was a matter of doubt even to Mrs. Walford, who had so far failed to discover the truth, her raillery being invariably met and turned aside by some playful retort. Her treatment of the baronet was marked by uniform courtesy; none could accuse her of coquetry, and if Sir Gilbert himself had been closely questioned on the subject, he could not have said that her manner had ever given him any encouragement beyond that which his own fancy had extracted. This was the position of affairs on the day of the Lowfield dinner-party, the invitation to which had been accepted by Sir Gilbert. He eagerly seized upon every chance that was likely to bring him into the society of Caroline, for whose sake he was enduring a kind of voluntary exile, having forsaken his bachelor haunts and amusements, deliberately abjured the attractions of the London season, and even curtailed his Christmas sojourn at Mottram Hall, thereby causing great grief and alarm to his housekeeper, who could not reconcile herself, even in prospect, to the existence of a Lady Mottram.

The dinner passed off successfully, as such things usually did at Lowfield, where the cook was unimpeachable, and the mistress had a talent for domestic management. Beside this, Mr. Arden united in himself the genial qualities of an excellent host. It is certain that none of the guests appreciated this more thoroughly than Sir Gilbert Mottram, to whom the Lowfield drawing-room was a sort of charmed atmosphere, in which it seemed to him that he would be content to remain for an indefinite period, so long as it secured him the presence of Caroline Arden. He would have craved no other enjoyment than that of hearing her voice, and watching her as she moved about the room, with her calm regal grace. In recalling his impressions of that day he always remembered that she wore a rich grey dress, that swept round her in heavy folds, showing a soft silver lustre, that caught the eye in shifting gleams where the light fell on it. What a treasure of beauty for him to transplant to his ancestral home, worthy of the proud old Mottram line. How he would rejoice in her! In fancy he had already reset the costly family jewels, which had been last worn by his

mother, and was ready to adorn with them this queen to whom his love was giving such empire over him. To the baronet the most enjoyable part of the day was the time spent with the ladies in the drawing-room, though he had little attention for anything but Caroline. The spacious room seemed full of her. In his abstraction, he was scarcely conscious that an animated discussion was going on between Mr. Arden and the gentlemen guests; for him the subject had no interest and the wit no point. He even lost sight of Miss Lettie Hilton at the piano, and failed to notice that the matrons had drawn together, pretty Mrs. Walford among the rest, apparently much amused and interested by the pleasant domestic talk of the rector's wife and Mrs. Arden, whose quiet voice seemed to have a soothing effect upon her listeners.

Music had been desired, and Miss Lettie Hilton was about to display her fine voice for the benefit of those who pleased to listen, and for Edward Arden in particular. Failing to impress Sir Gilbert Mottram, the young lady was not averse to try and win the inferior prize, though she found little encouragement in the languid attention which Edward paid her. The singing was concluded, and the fair vocalist was entertaining her listeners with an elaborate piece of music that seemed chiefly remarkable for crashes of sound. It was at this moment, so propitious for the carrying on of a tête-à-tête, that Sir Gilbert found himself looking over a book of engravings with Caroline Arden. He could not exactly tell how they had drifted together, or to what happy chance he owed the opportunity so unexpectedly thrown in his way; nor could he have explained what it was that made him avail himself of it, and precipitate events by rushing into an avowal. He only knew that his hour came, when he sat mechanically turning over leaves, and committing himself in some not very brilliant or striking criticisms.

It was not long before the flow of commonplace talk was arrested between them, and he found himself whispering on another theme, while Caroline listened with sealed lips and flushing, down-bent face.

It was not the first time she had heard such words. She remembered a similar avowal made to her not twelve months ago. But with her blind love for wealth and social distinction, it could not be that she would suffer any consideration to be balanced against the offer of a baronet's love, or admit any equality of claim between Sir Gilbert Mottram and the struggling sculptor, Lionel Elliott.

Happily for both, Miss Lettie's monopoly of the piano did them a service, for they were as free from observation in their corner of the well-lighted drawing-room as if they had been alone in the library, with the single exception of Mrs. Walford, whose eyes occasionally wandered in that direction; for she could not help feeling anxious to know how matters were progressing between the baronet and her friend.

The indefatigable pianist went on executing dif-

his queen over him, the day drawing anything ill of her,ous that been Mr. the subject even lost and failed, pretty much aesthetic talk et voice emers. Hilton benefit of Arden Mottram, win the engagement did her, was piece of shes of for the found s with w they ice he in his s that events at his over very place himself tened words, for not she against ality the

fault and brilliant flourishes, Edward Arden contriving to extract some amusement from the occupation of watching her fingers in their mazy dance over the keys. So long as he preserved even a semblance of attention, Miss Lettie was willing to dispense with other listeners.

The room seemed filled with a subdued hum of conversation, which the music held in check, and compelled to be carried on in undertones. It was then that Caroline Arden raised her head and replied to the baronet.

"Your preference does me honour, Sir Gilbert, and I do not undervalue it when I say that I am sorry you have spoken to me in this strain."

There could be no mistaking the words, low-spoken, but clear and distinct enough. The hand that rested on the edge of the open book trembled, and the changing colour on her cheeks told how much she was agitated.

"Sorry," he faltered; "what do you mean, Miss Arden?"

"That this is putting us both through a painful ordeal for no purpose."

"Why for no purpose? Caroline—let me call you Caroline—you must have seen that I loved; surely you will not refuse to listen."

"I am sorry, Sir Gilbert, because you deserve some return for what you are giving so freely. You have taken a serious tone, and I must meet you in a like spirit; for I dare not trifle in this—"

He interrupted her, saying, "I will wait your own time; accept any term of probation you choose to set, so long as you will give me some hope."

"It is impossible, Sir Gilbert Mottram."

"Why impossible, Miss Arden? It is not known that you have any prior engagement, and there is no bar between us."

She repeated his words slowly, as if spelling them over to herself. "No prior engagement, yet there is a bar that cannot be passed. Forget that you have addressed me on this subject, Sir Gilbert; for we shall never be more to each other than we are now. I have no love to give."

The concluding bars of the fantasia crashed into the ears of the baronet with a hopeless confusion of sound. At that moment he realised nothing except that he had proposed and been refused by the only woman whom he had ever cared to win.

#### CHAPTER LV.

##### DETAINED IN THE CITY.

EVA ASHTON and her grandfather had been some months domesticated in their London home. Mr. Fenwick and his daughter Louisa had done their best to soften the change and help to reconcile them to the new life; but with all these kind efforts in their behalf, the bereaved ones found it hard to bury the memory of their dead.

There were times when they could not shut out

the "light of other days;" when it would shine on them, making the present colder and greyer in contrast. They missed the unrestricted freedom and comfort of the dear old cottage in the sunny country lane. Apart from the time spent with his grandchild, the old man seemed to live in the past, and find his chief enjoyment in fighting the battles of life over again, sometimes distressing Eva by rambling unconnectedly, like one who talks in dreams—sometimes as a young man just beginning the world; but oftener at his farm, busy and energetic, with his days full of bustle and activity. It was sad to see him lingering among the shadows which he had conjured round him. He drooped visibly through the dark winter days. This was a new trial for Eva, but true to the law of faith and patience which she had set herself, she tried to bear it and be hopeful.

So the spring days found them. The bright April sunshine seemed to revive the old man. By the kindness of Mr. Fenwick, a Bath chair was placed at his service, and when the weather was fine he was daily wheeled about the enclosure in the square, Eva and the old dog being generally in attendance. This was the procession often watched from the windows of the house which overlooked the square.

"What ails my little girl? Thou art looking tired and pale this morning."

It was the old man who spoke, gazing with fond wistfulness into Eva's face. It had struck him there was something wrong about her looks on that bright spring morning, and he was taking alarm. The Bath chair had stopped in one of the walks, and the man who wheeled it had drawn aside while waiting for orders to go on.

David Ashton was getting better; he looked and talked that day more like his old self than Eva had seen or heard him since he came to London. The soft air that lifted the thin white locks from his temples seemed to have a special power of healing in its breath, and the aged face had caught new brightness from the sweet April sunshine, that seemed to be playing hide-and-seek among the fresh budding leaves.

He had to repeat his question before Eva answered. "Is all right at Lowfield, my dear? Is anything the matter between you and Edward?"

The girl's face crimsoned as she spoke. "No, grandfather; what put that thought in your head?"

"Thy pale face, child; thou hast seemed out of spirits all morning."

"Nonsense, dear grandfather, that is only a fancy of yours."

But the old man seemed scarcely satisfied.

"Let me see; John Hesketh wrote yesterday. Did his letter bring any bad news?"

"No; he only writes to say that he hopes to see us in a few weeks. You will not call that bad news."

"That I shall not, child. The sight of his face

will be like bringing back to us the old days. Your father always took a fancy to John. That would draw me to him, even if I did not like the lad for his own sake."

Eva did not reply. She was not thinking of John Hesketh just then, but recalling her grandfather's words about Lowfield.

"Anything the matter between her and Edward?" Almost unconsciously, that question had brought with it a shadow that did not pass quickly. A sigh from the old man roused her. She leaned over him, saying anxiously, "What is the matter, grandfather?"

"Nothing, child. I only got thinking, as I do sometimes, wondering how the old place looks this fine morning. It seems like discontent, and I try to shake it off, but it will come over me now and then. In a worldly sense, this life in London isn't a bad sort of change, but it isn't like home, Eva; not that I have any right to complain. Your cousin—the one called Barbara—is not as kind as she might be, but the others make up for her. She didn't take to us from the first; but people can't help their likes and dislikes, more than I can help hankering after the old days. You may let the man wheel me on now, my dear."

Neither Eva nor her grandfather was aware that they had been watched from one of the windows of the drawing-room, where Louisa Westbrook sat at work.

"Why, Louey, I don't believe you heard me open the door. What can there be outside to attract your attention?"

This was asked by Barbara, who had just come into the room unnoticed by her sister. Louisa answered without moving from her position by the window.

"I was just looking at our little cousin and her grandfather. The man has just wheeled him into the square. I am so glad he is well enough to go out, for they must miss the country so much, now the weather is getting warm and bright. What a fine profile the old man has, Barbara. His face would look magnificent in crayon."

"Nonsense, Louey; what fancies you do take about these people. Even that huge monster of a dog comes in for a share of your enthusiasm, because he belongs to them; but I vote the animal a nuisance, particularly in a drawing-room. He's only fit to be chained in a kennel outside. But I believe you would let them do anything they pleased in the house. As for Eva, it seems to me that in your estimation she never does anything wrong."

"Barbara, that is unjust as well as uncharitable."

"Yes, of course you think so, Louey. It is nothing unusual now for us to have opposite views; and I notice that you are always willing to take part against me in any question where she is concerned. The truth is, you are altered, Louey. I see it more every day, for I remember when you never disputed

anything or used a cross word in argument, but now you seem to delight in contradiction, and you are always ready to take up arms on their account. No wonder that I regret they ever came here; regret also that papa was foolish enough to burden himself with—"

Here the speaker was interrupted, Louisa's fair cheek flushing as she said hastily, "Barbara, you distress me. I don't like to hear my sister talking in this strain. You know as well as I that in a pecuniary sense Eva Ashton and her grandfather are no burdens on papa. The old man has sufficient for his wants, and Eva's father did not leave his daughter penniless. I heard papa say that it was a wonder to him how Uncle Alfred had managed to save so much out of his small income. But, apart from all this, I have seen enough to know that our little cousin has an independent spirit under her quiet manner, and I am sure that if she—"

"There, my dear Louey, you have said enough without going into one of your glowing panegyrics about our little cousin, as you call her; and I have something else to think of just now, for I came in to tell you that I have received a note from papa, saying that we are not to wait tea for him, as it is uncertain what time he will be home this evening. He gives no further explanation, but I have my own ideas about it. The truth is, Louey, I am very uneasy about papa."

There was unmistakable anxiety in Barbara's manner. It was evident that whatever her meaning might be she was sincere in it.

"Uneasy about papa?" repeated Louisa, dropping her needle. She had quickly caught her sister's tone of apprehension.

"Yes, Louey; I don't think it's City business that will detain him. I fancy it has something to do with a letter which he received this morning from Godfrey Marlow."

"How do you know it was from him?"

"I learned it from papa's exclamations on reading it. You remember what I wrote you about that person's last visit here."

"Do you mean that foggy day last November, when you tried to prevent him seeing papa?"

"Yes. I shall never forget that day, Louey. When I first heard the drawing-room bell rung with such violence I was afraid something dreadful had happened, but I did not expect the scene I saw on going into the room. Poor papa in a faint on his chair, and Godfrey Marlow leaning over him, giving orders to the servant, who was bathing his face with water. I thought at first he was dead."

Here the sisters' looks interrogated each other.

"I hope it is not that man who is keeping papa," faltered Louisa, turning pale.

"I hope not," echoed Barbara, "for he holds some mysterious threat over papa, and, as I told you, I am very uneasy about him."

(To be continued.)

## D U S T.

BY THE REV. T. M. MORRIS, IPSWICH.

**M**ANY things which deserve attentive consideration fail to a very large extent to secure it, and that chiefly so far as we can see, because they are so common—so familiar. There are those who profess to be ravished by the beauty of the rare and costly exotic, who will pass by with contemptuous disregard the equally real though less ostentatious beauty of the hedgerow flower. Yet, if we would but take the trouble more closely to examine some of these most "common things," we should find ourselves stepping at once into a new and undiscovered world full of beauty, significance, and mystery. Surprises, unanticipated revelations, await the inquirer in whatever direction he may push his investigations. Nothing can be more common than *dust*, especially at certain seasons of the year; nothing can be more commonplace than it at any season. A little while ago we should have been ready to inquire—what of interest, what of importance can be said about dust? But dust which we ordinarily tread thoughtlessly beneath our feet, and brush off from our persons and forth from our dwellings almost with a feeling of resentment, has of late secured for itself a considerable amount of attention.

Some time since Mr. Ruskin told us what we might see in the dust if we had but eyes to see. Ground down to powder we have in the dust the remains—the constituent elements of all manner of precious and beautiful things. "Exclusive of animal decay," he remarks, "we can hardly arrive at a more absolute type of impurity than the mud or slime of a damp overtrodden path in the outskirts of a manufacturing town. . . . That slime we shall find, in most cases, composed of clay (or brick-dust, which is burnt clay), mixed with soot, a little sand, and water. All these elements are at helpless war with each other, and destroy reciprocally each other's nature and power, competing and fighting for place at every tread of your foot—sand squeezing out clay, clay squeezing out water, and soot meddling everywhere and defiling the whole. Let us suppose that this ounce of mud is kept in perfect rest, and that its elements gather together like to like, so that their atoms may get into the closest relations possible. Let the clay begin. Ridding itself of all foreign substances, it gradually becomes a white earth, already very beautiful, and fit, with help of congealing fire, to be made into finest porcelain, and painted on, and be kept in kings' palaces. But such artificial consistence is not its best. Leave it still quiet, to follow its own instinct of unity; it becomes not only white, but clear; not only clear,

but hard; and so *set* that it can deal on the light in a wonderful way, and gather out of it the loveliest blue rays, only repressing the rest. We call it then a *sapphire*. Such being the consummation of the clay, we then give similar permission of quiet to the sand. It also becomes first a white earth; then it grows clear and hard, and at last arranges itself in mysterious and infinitely fine parallel lines, which have the power of reflecting, not merely the blue rays, but the blue, green, purple, and red rays, in the greatest beauty in which they can be seen through any hard material whatever. We call it then *opal*. In next order the soot sets to work. It cannot make itself white at first, but, instead of being discouraged, tries harder and harder, and at last comes out clear, the hardest thing in the world; and for the blackness it had, obtains in exchange the power of reflecting all the rays of the sun at once, in the most vivid blaze that any solid thing can emit. We call it then a *diamond*. Last of all the water purifies or wastes itself, contented enough if it only reaches the form of a dewdrop. But if we persist in its proceeding to a more perfect consistence, it crystallises into the shape of a star. So, for the ounce of slime we had at first, we have a sapphire, an opal, a diamond, set in the midst of a star of snow. We see then the seeming trouble—the degradations of the elements of earth must passively wait the appointed time of their restoration. But if there be in us a nobler life than in those strangely moving atoms; if, indeed, there is an eternal difference between the *fire* which inhabits them and that which animates us, it must be shown by each of us in his appointed place—not merely in the pretence, but in the activity of our hope; not merely by our desire, but by our labour for the time, when the dust of the generations of men shall be conformed for foundations of the gates of the city of God."

Much more recently one of our chief scientific men—Professor Tyndal—has invested *dust* with a new interest, teaching us that the atmosphere, when even it appears most free from dust, is, in reality, always full of it, and that these minute and often invisible floating particles of matter are probably most important agents in conveying and propagating disease. Thus it comes to pass, strangely enough, that the dust which is the abiding memorial of our mortality, is also one of the concurring agents which secure it.

We need not feel surprise as we discover the many allusions to dust which occur in God's Word. In the wonderful revelation with which we are therein presented we have nearly everything

pressed into the service of God; things near at hand and far off; things the most majestic and the most minute; things the most precious and the most vile. God points to the stars above our heads and to the flowers which blossom at our feet; to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field—in fact, there is scarcely anything in nature or in life which does not serve some purpose of illustration or instruction. We need then feel no surprise when we find the very dust of the earth commissioned to teach us certain truths, which we may all with advantage lay to heart and bear in mind.

Regarding "dust" as a teacher, believing it is sent forth on an errand—that it comes to us charged with a message, let us interrogate it; let us ascertain what it has to say—what it has to say to us.

If we will but listen, we shall find that the "dust" is commissioned to speak to us certain words of *instruction*, of *caution*, and of *comfort*.

The *dust* comes to us as a teacher, speaking to us words of *instruction*. The dust teaches us something as to three things—our *origin*, we are from the dust; our *condition* in God's sight, we are but as the dust; our *doom*, we are to return to the dust again.

Pointing to the dust, God reminds us of our origin. His word to us is, "Know, O proud man, exulting in thy strength and beauty, from what thou didst spring, the pit from which thou wast digged, the dust of which thou wast fashioned." We have been told of men who by the force of circumstances, or by their own genius and industry, have been lifted from positions of poverty and obscurity to the enjoyment of great affluence and high distinction; who have kept, as carefully-treasured relics, the mean clothing with which they were once attired, or the humble tools with which they once wrought, that ever and anon looking upon these they might remember what men are so prone to forget—the obscurity of their original condition. Just so would God have us keep in view the dust, as the memorial of our origin. His word to us distinctly is, "Dust thou art." We are told that the Lord formed man out of the dust, and the very name *Adam* by which our first father was distinguished, continually reminded him, and should as continually remind his descendants, of the red earth out of which he was fashioned. Our bodies are fearfully and wonderfully made; the more we become acquainted with our physical constitution, the more must we admire the wisdom, the skill, the beneficence of God. As we see the eye sparkling with intelligence, the face ruddy with health, and flushing with enthusiasm, the hand with all its strength and cunning, the tongue with all its eloquence of speech and sweeter enchantment of

song, the brain with all its mighty and mysterious energies, we are ready to say, "Surely this physical frame, so wonderfully compacted and organised, can claim no affinity with the dust." Yet, after all, man's body is nothing more than the dust of the earth "married to the breath of God." God fashioned man's body out of the earth—the dust—and then breathing into his nostrils the breath of life, he became a living soul. We are but dust. These wonderful bodies of ours are—to use the words of a recent writer—nothing more than a handful of dust and a pail or two of water. Some time since a stone coffin was disinterred, which had been buried no one knew how long; when opened it was found to contain only a mere handful of dust, which the wind would drive away like the dust of the summer threshing-floor.

Dust reminds us of our *present condition*. We are but as dust now; we are but as dust in God's esteem. He accounts all the nations of the earth but as the small dust of the balance. When God appeared to Adam after his transgression, he reminded him of this fact—"Dust thou art." It is as though he said, "Who art thou, O man, that thou shouldest rise up in insurrection and rebellion against thy Maker? Who art thou that thou shouldest follow thine own will, and transgress the commandment of thy God? Remember, thy vain aspirations notwithstanding, thou art but dust, and unto dust thou shalt return."

This may serve to express the *weakness* and *fragility* of our bodily nature. We say, of our *body* nature; for the word—

"'Dust thou art, to dust returnest,  
Was not spoken of the soul.'"

What word could serve better to express the weakness and fragility of our bodily and physical nature than this word *dust*? Fashion anything of dust, of dry earth or sand, and a mere touch, a rough breath of wind will reduce it to its original condition. We are not likened to molten brass or iron, to sculptured granite or marble—we are dust. We are, however, so accustomed to witness daily recurring evidences of the frailty of man's nature, that we are but little impressed by a sense of it.

Though now and then we are painfully and vividly reminded of our mortality, it is wonderful how easily we lose sight of, how habitually we ignore, a fact so obvious and undeniable.

Dust reminds us, not only of the fragility of our nature, but also of the *meanness* of our present condition. We are only dust. Nothing is held in less esteem than dust. We are continually sweep it away as refuse, removing it from our persons as that which is an offence. It is the ultimate issue of all corruption. This is the point beyond

which we cannot go in reducing any substance. We feel that if we grind any ordinary thing to powder, reduce it to dust, we may then leave it for the wind to drive away. Well, we are dust. We dwell in tabernacles of clay, in earthly houses which must sooner or later be dissolved. Those of the children of men who have had a proper sense of their true position and character, have been ready to acknowledge that they were but as dust and ashes in God's sight; and we are told that all the nations of the earth before God are but as a drop of a bucket and the small dust of the balance. Truly man in his best estate is altogether vanity.

But by the dust we are not only reminded of our origin and condition, we are also reminded of our *doom*, our *destiny*. As we are from the dust, so are we destined to return to the dust. Some very frail, fragile things are wonderfully preserved for a long period. We for a time are wonderfully preserved; but however long or short a time we may continue in this present mode of existence, we are sure that sooner or later we shall return to our native dust. Our destiny, in this particular, has been determined by our sin. What might have been man's destiny if he had not become subject to sin we know not, but we do know, for we have this on God's own authority, that but for sin he would not have been subject to death; that while tracing his origin to the dust, he would have been exempt from the doom of returning to it. In the reign of death for the last 6,000 years, we see the abiding memorial of man's sin; we see the brand which God has affixed to the sin of man—proof of his unchanging hatred to sin, and his invincible determination to punish it. Whatever men may think or say as to the teaching of Scripture in reference to the sin of man, and the consequences resulting from it, there remains this fact to be accounted for—that the sentence pronounced against sinners 6,000 years ago is still in force, is at this very moment being carried out and executed; men and women and little children are dying all around us, and the only intelligible explanation of this grim fact is that to which we have already adverted, that with which we are furnished in God's Word. Man's mortality is the consequence of man's transgression, and the carrying out of the sentence originally pronounced—"Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."

The dust comes to us, speaking not only in the way of *instruction*, but also in the way of *caution*. We can scarcely accept the teaching of the dust as to our origin, our condition, our doom, without being practically influenced by what we learn.

If we will but listen to its voice, we may hear the dust cautioning us against all pride, vanity, and undue self-exaltation; bidding us account the facts referred to as a ground of humility, warning

us not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. We should not think too highly of ourselves. What are we after all? We are only dust. These bodies which we are so careful to pamper—which we are so anxious to have well fed, well clothed, well housed—upon which we bestow so much thought and attention—what are they? They were fashioned out of the dust, they are destined to return to the dust. When we are tempted to think too much of ourselves, to indulge in feelings of pride, personal vanity, undue self-complacency, it may be well for us to remember that in a very few years at most we shall be dust.

These same considerations should prevent us from exalting ourselves above others. There are social and civil distinctions which we cannot but recognise, and ought cheerfully to acquiesce in. But a due regard to these natural and inevitable distinctions is a very different thing from that spirit of pride, vanity, self-esteem, which leads us, to use a common expression, "to look down" on others—to treat them with hauteur and contempt. This spirit is not peculiar to any class or condition of society; the temptation to disparage and slight others is one against which we have all need to be on our guard. How mean, how despicable, how unreasonable a thing it is for one man to look down upon another, because his attire is less costly, his fare less sumptuous, his abode less commodious. In a few years the rich and the poor, the distinguished and the obscure, the peer and the peasant, will have returned to their native dust.

In the daily papers, some little time since, reference was made to a very singular circumstance, which cannot but be regarded as addressing an inarticulate rebuke to that undue self-esteem in which we are all so prone to indulge. An Eastern traveller, returning from Syria by way of Alexandria, told us what he saw going on in the harbour of that ancient city. Some merchant vessels lying not far from that in which he was, were being laden with a strange-looking and a strange-smelling material, which was being brought in lighters from a well-known ridge of rock in Arab Bay. "Load after load of the mysterious pallid merchandise was brought and transferred to the ships, and the tourist at last asked what the commodity might be. He was informed that it was known in the trade as 'Egyptian guano,' and that it was the dust and fragments of innumerable mummies and bodies collected from the ancient catacombs and sepulchres, which honeycomb the ridge of rocks along Alexandria Harbour, extending underground as far as Pompey's Pillar. For the last nine or ten months a brisk trade had been going on in the port in thus rooting up the defunct Egyptians, antique Greeks, and warlike Macedonians, whose relics lie,

along with sacred ibises, cats, bulls, and crocodiles, in those subterranean cities of the dead."

Well does the writer remark, "And this pale dust, if ancient chroniclers speak the truth, belonged to an extinct people who swathed the inanimate body, and anxiously stuffed it with spices and gums, in order that it might remain as much as possible *in statu quo* until, as they believed, the wandering soul, having accomplished its peripigrinations, should return to make it live and breathe again. Poor ancient gentlemen and lovely Nile ladies of 4,000 years ago, what a world of useless cost and trouble did you all waste! The priests got their fee, of course, and the embalmers their pay; but, after all, the upshot of the expensive ceremony was destined to prepare spurious Peruvian guano for the turnip-fields of the barbarous North!"

What a homily on human pride and greatness is here read to us! There seems but little room left for pride, when we consider "to what base uses we may return."

Still more should such considerations as these tend to make us and keep us humble before God. What are we as compared with him? What reason have we to cherish a spirit of humility when we remember, not only the natural meanness of our condition, but bear in mind also the fact that we have lost our innocence and contracted guilt. If we are truly humbled before God, if we have attained to any proper sense of our true condition, our humility will appear in a diligent and grateful use of all those means of help and grace which are placed by God within our reach. If we feel that we are but as dust, we shall not—to use a common colloquialism—*be above using them*. Nothing will so surely lead us to rejoice in the all-sufficiency of God as a deep pervading sense of our own insufficiency.

The dust should teach us to use the world and not abuse it. We should remember that this world is not our home. If instead of tabernacling in these bodies for a season, it were our lot to live here for ever, our devotion to this world, and the various interests of this present life, would be more reasonable; but we are only dust, and we should anticipate and prepare for that change which is so surely coming, when we shall return to the dust.

The dust, while speaking to us in the way of instruction and caution, speaks to us also in the way of *comfort* and *encouragement*.

Being such as we are, it is a comfort to be assured that God knows what we are. "He knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust." God has had a merciful regard to the weakness and frailty of our nature in all his dealings with us, in all the provisions which he has made for us. He looks down upon us with tender grace and yearning compassion, "Like as a father pitith

his children, so the Lord pitith them that fear him; for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust."

He has provided for us a Saviour mighty to save; one who is raised up from the midst of his brethren; one who, like us, can claim affinity with the dust. He passed by the angels, and took hold of the seed of Abraham. He was made flesh, and tabernacled among us. He became a partaker of flesh and blood. How much reason have we to admire the grace and condescension of God in paying such regard to creatures like us! Are we not ready to exclaim, "What is man that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man that thou dost visit him?" Verily, beyond all controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh.

We have reason to be thankful that we are destined to return to the dust; for though this is a sentence pronounced upon the guilty, and is of course to be regarded as, in some sort, a curse, yet viewed in connection with man's altered condition, it is a curse which carries a blessing in its bosom. Just as we have reason to bless God that he has made the eating of bread dependent upon the sweat either of brain or brow, so have we reason to bless God that, being but dust, we are to return to the dust again. In the case of those who, through faith in Christ, are prepared for it, death is shorn of its terrors; grim and forbidding as may be its aspect, it comes forth to such on a ministry of mercy. Like the fretting leprosy, sin has so eaten into the bodily nature of man, that the tabernacle has to be taken down and destroyed. Death is necessary to our complete emancipation. Death sets us free from those material occasions of and temptations to sin, which vex and harass us to the very last. It sets us free from all the afflictions of this present life. By death we are delivered from death, and translated to a state higher and nobler than the present, in which death has no power, no place.

Though we are but dust, we are to be transformed—transfigured. We have seen how dust, under altered conditions, may pass into the most noble and beautiful forms; may become the delicate porcelain, or glittering sapphire, amethyst, or diamond. But what we see here is as nothing to that we shall see by-and-by in the kingdom of the resurrection. We are taught in God's Word not to despise the material, but to anticipate its transfiguration—its glorification. Christ is the Saviour of the body as well as of the soul. These vile bodies—these bodies of our humiliation—are to be changed and fashioned like unto the glorious body of our Lord. Let us then with holy desire and confidence anticipate "the time when the dust of the generations of men shall be conformed for foundations of the gates of the city of God."



(Drawn by W. SMALL.)

"The motherly hostess was trying to force some hot tea between the lips of the insensible girl"—p. 349.

## THE GOLDEN RULE.

**W**HAT to the sea are those unceasing waves  
That beat and fret their hour upon the  
shore?  
Could twice ten thousand times their furious wrath  
Exhaust the grand depth of the ocean's store?  
  
What recks the scion of a line of kings  
Of Faction's clamorous shout, or Envy's groan?  
Can myriad pygmies shake a Titan's crown,  
Or dim the light that shines upon his throne?  
  
That which is great within itself, is great;  
A truth that is can never cease to be,  
Though a whole world of carping Pharisees  
Throw each a stone at its sublimity.

Not by a measured rule, or straitened creed,  
Not with a narrow faith—itself a lie—  
Mete to thy fellow-man the golden dues  
That should be born of widest charity.  
  
Not with the dogmas of short-sighted sects,  
Who spar and wrangle o'er the glorious Page;  
Harming the cause they idly deem they serve,  
Misleading ardent youth—perplexing age:  
  
No! but in broad and unconstrained faith  
Interpret thou that Book for age and youth;  
Itself the All, needing no human rule  
To mete its treasures or to mar its truth.

ASTLEY H. BALDWIN.

## JENNIE'S BROOCH.

**J**IT is Saturday night, and Carndell High Street is crowded with labouring people from the outlying districts, who have come into the town "to shop."

Amongst them, towering by a head above most of his fellows, is Will Stent, his grave, resolute mouth softening into smiles as he listens to the shrewd remarks of the trim little old woman—his mother—who, in her cloth cloak and black bonnet, trots nimbly beside him, the money he has given to her to lay out clenched tightly in her palm.

"Ay, let 'em call again," she comments, as her son turns a deaf ear to an invitation from a group loitering at the door of an alehouse. "Let 'em call till they deafens themselves; they'll not get you amongst 'em. Work hard all a week, an' throw their earnings down their throats o' Saturday nights, that's their way; stead o' getting a bit o' tidy clothes to wear, or a shillin' put by for rainy days. What be ye lookin' back for?" she questions anxiously. "If ye're thirsty, there's as nice a drop o' beer at home as ever I brewed. Can't ye wait for that?"

"If I wanted a pint, I'd have it, mother, and you should help me drink it," answered Will, with that spice of independence which keeps her a little in awe of him; "but I don't, and if you'll get what else you want to buy, we'll be off home together."

With a little self-gratulation at her son's soberness, Mrs. Stent turned into the grocer's shop to make her purchases, and Will, a tinge of colour rising in his cheeks, stepped quietly back to the window of the jeweller, where all sorts of trinkets were displayed.

Down in one corner thereto was a little ivory brooch, delicately carved into a wreath of flowers, which, as the only simple ornament amongst a profusion of bright stones in golden settings, had attracted him. He had a profound disgust for the gaudy imitations of jewels the Carndell lassies hung in their ears or

pinned in their shawls; and he thought Jennie, the parlour-maid at the Hall, never looked so well as in the print dress and linen collar she wore at her work; but he knew that the old-fashioned brooch in which she treasured a little bit of her parents' hair, was broken, and he had a fancy to replace it.

Before his mother had finished making her purchases the ivory brooch was in Will's vest, and a pleasant vision dancing before his honest brown eyes of the glow of delight with which Jennie would open the little box that contained his first love-gift.

Mrs. Stent talked on about the price of bacon and the fall in the soap, quite content with the occasional "yes" or "no" her dreamy son uttered as they toiled up the hills, beyond which lay the broad common, on whose verge stood their dwelling.

A merry voice trolling a popular song was heard behind them, and they were soon overtaken by a young man in the livery of the squire. With a nod to Mrs. Stent, who mentally anathematised him as a conceited chattering goose, he swings along by the side of Will, who more sociably shortens his stride to keep step with him.

"Third time I've been into the town to-day: once for a tongue the butcher had forgotten, once with the carriage, and now for some books for Miss Margaret. Enough to run a fellow off his legs, isn't it? But never mind; I did a bit of business for myself at the same time. Didn't I see you outside Campton's? Looking at the wedding-rings, I s'pose. I've been there myself to buy something for my sweetheart. Look ye here; pretty, isn't it?"

Will cast a glance at the silver brooch—a snake, with gleaming eyes of garnet—and though inclined to compare it unfavourably with his own purchase, civilly assented; but Mrs. Stent shortly said she didn't see what gals wanted with them things, when a pin or a hook and eye did just as well.

"Don't you tell my sweetheart that," cried Tom, not a whit discomposed, "or maybe she won't wear it; and I've set my heart on her looking smart in it on Sunday."

"Who does he call his sweetheart?" asked Mrs. Stent, when the young fellow had parted from them to take a short cut across some fields. "Is it Jennie? Gals have such flirting ways there's no trusting none of 'em. I wouldn't be too sure of her if I was you."

Will made no answer. The maternal jealousy that looked askance at the young creature who had stolen into her boy's heart, had often oozed out in such speeches as these; but he had the gift of silence, and only betrayed by increased gravity the displeasure they gave him. Nor was this often lasting; for he loved his mother dearly, and the kiss he gave her as he came into the cottage kitchen on the following morning, ready for church, was as hearty as usual.

"Now, don't ee be late back as you was last time," she said, following him to the door; "the pudden was 'most cold, and the garden stuff was done to death."

Will reddened a little as he gave the required promise. Those walks home from church along the lanes, under the park fence, with Jennie sauntering beside him, were looked forward to, and dwelt upon, all the week through; and the pause at the stile, when the other servants at the Hall went on, leaving the young couple to say their parting words alone—had Mrs. Stent forgotten her own youth, that she murmured when those happy moments were prolonged? prolonged till Jennie fluttered off, afraid of a scolding from the housekeeper, and Will's dinner was spoiled.

It was a sunny Sabbath morning, and the breeze that danced amongst the dry leaves breathed renewed life and gladness into the hearts of those who trod the homeward path after the morning service. The squire's servants chatted cheerfully, and Jennie's cheeks were rosy, and her dewy lips fragrant with health and happiness; but what ailed Will? Although, in recognition of their known attachment, room had been made for him to walk beside his betrothed, he had scarcely spoken, and there was a stern look in his eyes before which her high spirits vanished. Had anything happened? Had he lost his work? No; Farmer Hyles often said Will was the best hand he had in his employ. Maybe he would tell her at the stile; and as soon as they were alone she raised her questioning glance to his grave face.

He pointed to the silver brooch that fastened her shawl. "I have seen that thing before, Jennie, and I know how you came by it."

The girl coloured. "Well, Will, I've a right to wear it if I choose."

"Have you? Then you don't care what I think about it; and yet you've told me you love me, Jennie."

Her hands sought the trinket, but the next moment they fell by her side, and she looked at him with pouting displeasure.

"I'll not be controlled in such things as this already; I will wear the brooch."

Without another word Will turned on his heel and left her; and half angry, half sorry, Jennie ran— sobbing as she went—to the Hall.

"Isn't Jennie coming to have tea with us?" Mrs. Stent asked, as her son, after rejecting his dinner altogether, and wandering away over the common for hours, came home and began to unlace his shoes.

"She'll never come again, mother. It's all over betwixt us; and I've a headache—I'll go to bed."

The mother's first impulse was a joyful one. Will had been her all till the pretty face of this girl beguiled him. Winter and summer they had dwelt contentedly together in the cottage her dead husband's industry had made their own, and the thought of an interloper had been a galling one. To have to make way for a gay flirty girl, who didn't know what hard work was; to feel that she had no longer the right to lay out Will's money—to plan for him, or even to labour for him—had filled her jealous heart with dismay.

She forgot what Will might be suffering while she rejoiced, and when, with a pang, she remembered this, and furtively investigated his face, she learned but little. Will made no parade of his grief. He was a trifle quieter, perhaps; and with a desolate look about his eyes when he lifted them sometimes from the books and papers he brought home from the town, and pored over from the time he left his work until their early hour for retiring.

Mrs. Stent moved about her work more briskly with each succeeding day, and took renewed pride in the pretty cottage; but the pleasure was checked when Tom from the Hall burst in upon her, one afternoon, with a face of concern.

"Pretty mischief I've done, and never knew it till I worried the truth out of poor Jennie an hour ago! It's all a silly mistake, and my foolish chattering that's come between her and your Will. I got the brooch sure enough, but she gave me the money, and asked me to get it for her. As to sweethearts, she's much too good a girl to listen to any of my nonsense. You'll tell Will all about it," he added, "and please give him this note from Jennie. I'd stay and see him, but I'm to go to Scotland with Mr. John, and we're off in an hour or two. You'll make him understand that 'twas my fault, won't you?"

Mrs. Stent watched him from the door as he bounded away, satisfied that all would be well between the lovers; and her face grew harder and colder with every passing minute. Only that morning Will had gone off to his work with a lighter step, and his head as erect as of yore. There wasn't a doubt but that he had conquered any little soreness he had felt respecting Jennie; was it worth while to

bring back the old remembrance, and induce him to risk his happiness again?

The wind blew cold across the wide treeless common, and with a shiver the old woman went back to her fire, still twisting Jennie's note over and over between her fingers. It fluttered from them, and fell on the hearth close to a lighted brand that began to scorch the paper. She stooped to save it, then paused irresolutely—paused till the letter that cost Jennie so many tears and pains to write was smouldering away; and with a guilty sense of her wrongdoing, Mrs. Stent went and busied herself in another part of the cottage, till nothing remained but a few ashes.

Will was more tender to her than usual that evening; more tolerant of her peevish speeches; more anxious to please her. He altered the hasp of the lattice, so that it should not wake her from sleep by its rattling, and nailed some drugged around the door, saying as he did so, "I must make all comfortable against the cold weather comes; I shouldn't like to think of you—the only friend I have in the world—shivering or suffering with the rheumatism through my neglect."

As she listened, his mother no longer regretted that the letter was destroyed. If he should ever discover what she had done, he would acknowledge that she had acted wisely, in not disturbing the content that had fallen upon them.

A day or two afterwards Mrs. Stent had occasion to go to Carnell. With her customary forethought, she timed her journey so as to be home before Will, who was generally a little later on Friday—Farmer Hyles's pay-day. For a wonder, however, he was home before her. He had taken the key from its hiding-place over the porch, lit the fire, and gone into his own room, where the noises he was making induced his mother to follow. Beside a box, in which he had packed his small wardrobe, knelt the young man; and on the card he was nailing upon it, the half-stupefied mother read: "Passenger by the *Calliope* to Portland, for Nebraska."

"Don't look so scared, mother," he said, as he led her back to her arm-chair beside the hearth. "I'd have told you before, but I was afraid you'd take it to heart."

"Say it's not true, my boy!—say it's not true!" she moaned.

"But that would be no good, when my passage-money's paid, and I'm off to Liverpool with half-a-dozen more first thing in the morning," answered Will. "Don't fret, I shall make a man of myself over there, and send for you to keep house for me."

"You were doing well enough here," Mrs. Stent expostulated. "The house and the garden's your own, and your wages is good. Why should you go elsewhere?"

Will averted his head, as he replied in choked tones, "Don't say no more, mother. I can't stay here."

When I lost Jennie, I lost all. If I'm to forget her, I must go right away. You don't know what I've felt since we parted."

Conscience-stricken Mrs. Stent threw her apron over her head, and began to rock to and fro; whilst Will, afraid from her wild ejaculations that he had been too abrupt, made the tea, and waited upon her as handily as a woman, sitting beside her with her cold hands clasped in his till she grew calmer. Then he showed her where he had put a third of his savings for her use until he could send her more; and kissing her wrinkled forehead, said a faltering good-bye.

She clung to his arm wildly. "Already! Nay, nay! ye said to-morrow. You'd not leave me yet, Will!"

"But I must be at Harborough to-night, mother; for we go from there by the first train. Say God bless me, and let me go."

She dropped back in her chair; and, after fetching a compassionate neighbour, and seeing her to stay with his mother till the morning, Will Stent shouldered his trunk, took one glance round the dear old home it had been his pride to embellish, and dry-eyed but heavy-hearted bent his steps across the common, nor once looked back.

"Fetch Jennie! fetch Jennie from the Hall!" were the first words the miserable mother uttered; and the neighbour, eager to oblige, sent one of her children to say that Mrs. Stent was begging to see Jennie directly.

The girl flushed joyfully when the message was brought to her. Will had accepted her explanation; Will had sent to bid her come to his mother; and she lost no time in obtaining leave and hurrying to the cottage.

The night had closed in when she reached it. The neighbour had gone home to put her children to bed, and Mrs. Stent sat alone, the family Bible open upon the table before her, her rigid features ghastly with suppressed emotion.

A chill crept over Jennie at the sight of the expiring fire, the unsnuffed candle, and the despairing face that met hers. She looked around for Will.

His mother comprehended the look. "He's gone, child; we'll never see him more—never! Oh dear! the good book's full of God's judgments on murderers and disobedient children; but it doesn't tell anywhere of a mother that wronged her boy and drove him from her, as I have done by mine!"

Jennie tottered forward and sat down beside her. The revulsion was too great. She had come exulting in the prospect of a reconciliation; prepared to be a little cold and coy before she pardoned a repentant lover, and he was gone!

Then an angry sense of the hard judgment he had dealt her stayed the current of her grief. Putting her arms around Mrs. Stent's neck, she passionately cried, "How could he leave you? You had not vexed him."

A pause—a struggle, and the humiliating confession was made. At first Jennie started away, feeling as though she hated the cause of all this misery; but gentler thoughts soon predominated. Will had not ceased to love her as she had been imagining. It was the depth, the intensity of his affection that had made his home intolerable, and was sending him over the ocean.

"Don't sob so terribly, Mrs. Stent," she said. "He will come back to us when he knows all."

"And who shall tell him?" was the desponding query. "Before a letter can reach him he'll be on his way to this new country he's bound for. He only stays at Harborough till early morning."

Jennie went to the door and looked out. A stormy sky and intense darkness met her gaze as she turned her eyes in the direction Will's footsteps had trod a few hours earlier. But her resolution was taken.

She came back to Mrs. Stent's side. "Kiss me, and pray to God to take care of me. I'm going to Harborough to fetch Will back."

The old woman caught hold of her hands. "Child, you maun think on't. Why, 'tis a matter o' eight miles, and all cross country, nothing but common an' marsh an' sandy ridges; and no road but a foot-track that ye'd never find such a night as this."

"I'd do more than that for Will's sake," cried Jennie, with a sob. "Better risk anything than let him go away thinking me false to him."

"I'd go wi' ye, but the strength's all gone out o' me," sighed the mother, beginning to waver. "If I were sure and certain nothing would happen ye—"

Jennie listened to no more. With one fervent prayer for protection, one hopeful encouraging smile to Mrs. Stent, she was gone.

Only those familiar with the wild desolate moors that lie between Carnell and Harborough can fully understand the difficulties that beset the undertaking. Jennie had often rambled with Will to where the hills overhung a wide, marshy valley, looking like the bed of a lake whose waters had been dried up centuries ago. On the further side of this valley,

behind some dense plantations of the Scotch fir, she knew that the little town of Harborough was situated. For Will's sake she resolved to be brave and strong; for the love of him she strove against the dread that assailed her, when a distant clock tolled the midnight hour and found her still wandering amidst the quagmires of the marshy valley. Stumbling on—still on—faint, despairing, she fell at last, overcome with fatigue. She could no longer conceal from herself that she was lost. Then as she crept beneath a bank for protection from the elements, a passionate cry rose up from her heart for help from above.

The hour for the departure of the emigrants from Harborough was at hand. Mothers and sisters were clinging about their dear ones; only Will Stent stood a little apart, more sorrowful even than they, for he was alone. The landlord of the inn where he had slept and breakfasted came and touched him on the shoulder. "Will you lend us a hand here for a minute? Two chaps going to work have picked up a decent-looking young woman. She seems nigh dead with cold, and my missus is for getting her into a warm bed, and sending for the doctor."

Will followed to where the motherly hostess was trying to force some hot tea between the lips of the insensible girl. One look at the poor pale face, around which the fair tresses hung damp and dishevelled, and it was tenderly taken to Will's bosom.

Jennie soon recovered sufficiently to tell her story, and the emigrants went to Nebraska without Will Stent, whose penitent mother received him back as from the dead. Jennie, gay and happy, she had disliked; but the Jennie whose constitution long felt the effects of that night's wanderings, needed all her love and tender watching, and—true woman, despite her jealousy—she bestowed it ungrudgingly. And so, in the early spring, the ivory brooch, that had lain so long in Will's pocket, was brought out to fasten the shawl Jennie wore at her wedding, and his mother's lips were the first to kiss her, and pray for a blessing upon the union.

L. C.

## "OUR TOM."

### A STORY OF THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

#### PART II.

**B**UT," said the lady, "the doctors are all so good and gentle that things are not half so dreadful as you might imagine. Sending them home is the hardest thing of all to do. There is a particular fund—the Samaritan Fund, it is called—out of which we pay to send certain cases to the sea-side, and also pay for instruments, &c., for those poor children, who would otherwise never be able to obtain them. Help for this fund is always most welcome."

How glad I was to be able to give something to this excellent fund, with the earnest prayer that my gift might be accepted for Christ's sake.

And so we said good-bye to the dear little hospital, leaving it in sweet summer sunshine, after having bought a wonderful little book about the "Way to Nurse Sick Children," and which I perused that evening, thinking of the "little un" in that crowded court in Fleet Street.

Next day we went again to Mrs. Brunt's, and I at once told little Tom about my visit to the hospital.

He listened with beaming eyes, though not quite able to take all in. At last I told him that one little boy there was ill like him, and he immediately asked if he would grow any bigger, or always be little like him. I said that the doctors hoped to make him better, and that if Tommy would like to be made better, perhaps they could do the same for him in that nice place.

The soft eyes overflowed with tears at once, and beseeching hands were raised.

"Oh, lady! don't let me go there; mother couldn't remember the things, and Ben would be lost without me."

I knew my dear mother was telling Mrs. Brunt what she would talk over with Tom, so I turned the subject. I had brought birdie to see his old master, and also a lovely little kitten, who could live upon the little child's bed, and amuse him with funny tricks. I also brought a copy of those sweet little "Hymns for Little Children."

My dear mother had told Mrs. Brunt the effect of our visit to the hospital, and the poor woman was quite overcome. She had never heard of the place, but little Tom had been an out-patient at one of the large hospitals for some time, about two years before. Evidently the parting, if it ever came to pass, would be a hard one; for, as Mrs. B. said, "she had never crossed him, and he was as clever, and helped her to do her work like any grown man."

We found that the little boy always kept note of all her washing, remembering each article as it was washed, or dried, or ironed, as she could not read or write. Evidently, for the time, as much anxiety and perplexity as thankfulness filled their minds—that mother and son—so we thought it best for us to retire, saying they must talk it over with Ben and Jack, and that we would call again in two days.

The second evening after—Sunday—when I returned from evening service, I found Ben waiting in the hall to see me. I guessed at once that the family had come to some conclusion on the subject of the hospital, so I led the way into the dimly-lighted dining-room, in pity to the shy giant.

"Sit down, Ben," I said, "and let us talk over this idea of ours. What do you think of it?"

"Well, ma'am—and thank you kindly—I have been trying to think on it night and day since mother and little un told about it, but it's 'ard parting with our Tom. You see, he's awake of a mornin' when I gets up, and says he, 'Be a good boy to-day, Ben; don't get drunk, and don't swear at them 'orses if yer can 'elp it, and come 'ome as soon as yer can, Benny, to me and mother; I shall be all ready for yer, cos it's so long in bed when yer don't come home,' and he'll say lots o' little things, he will, and I goes off to work as cheerful, you wouldn't believe. And then our poor Jack; he gets up, and little un tells him what to do, and what to think on, and helps him find his things, and then he goes off cheerful-like to 'is

work—he goes mat-makin', but 'e don't do much cos of 'is side bein' a bit paralysed-like. Then little un and mother gits up—leastwise, mother do—and little un helps her with the washin' all day, and keeps count of the clothes; and they never lose a thing, cos if mother goes out a bit, little un's on the watch, and people knows that, bless yer; and then mother gits a bit downhearted along of father's goin' off, and little un's back, now and then, and he'll cheer her up better nor any grown person, and make out as he's gettin' strong and well and all manner. I've heard him when I was out o' work, and we used to cheer up, and couldn't for shame to be downhearted, and 'im on 'is poor back all day long, and not much to give 'im to eat neither. I know them 'orspitiles is wonderful places for curin' and that, but we makes so much on our little un, bein' so little, and so pretty too; and maybe they wouldn't let me see 'im, as I'm mostly dirty with the heavin' of 'em; and our room ud seem so empty, lady."

I let the poor good fellow have his talk out. I knew he must feel all and more than he could say, and that he had kept much to himself; and then I told him all I have already told you, as much in his own light as I could manage to put it, about the little Children's Hospital; and I pointed out that his delicate little brother could not but grow worse and soon leave him altogether, if he were kept pent up in that close bad air, and that our dear Saviour Christ had said that it was God the Father's will that his little ones should not perish from want of care and tending. I could not say he would ever be cured, but I knew that the good doctor's skill would most likely much alleviate his sufferings, and there was more than a chance of his getting well. Several times during our conversation, great tears rolled down Ben's brown cheeks, and to his dismay, when I gave him my hand at parting, one fell upon my wrist and left a black mark there, which I did not hurry to wash away.

The next day my mother went alone to Mrs. Brunt's; I was obliged to go elsewhere, and on her return I was able to write to the kind lady superintendent, saying that we hoped she would let our little friend have the next vacant medical bed. Meantime I knew the struggle that was going on in the hearts that so tenderly loved poor little Tommy. Poor things, they all feared to lose the frail bodily presence of the little child, who was, I know and believe, a link, as it were, or an interpreter to and of heavenly things. His sayings, quaint and odd enough, told of a most lovely trust and faith in the "Kind Man, who did a lot of things for people, and then went up in heaven."

In due time we had word that a bed was vacant; and in a very nervous state of mind we ordered the carriage to be ready at a certain hour to take "little un" to his new home. The dirty court seemed dirtier than ever in the blazing August sun, the foul

smells more poisonous, and the voices of quarrelling men and screeching women louder than ever. We worked our way up the dingy stairs, and knocked at the door. I was struck with the great change in the little child. I had not seen him for ten days, and the excitement had told upon the little frail body. His poor mother, I could see, was watching my face wistfully, so I only asked, as cheerfully as possible, if he was quite ready to go in the nice carriage, and see all the other dear little sick children, who were getting better in the pretty house.

"Yes, lady, I'm ready; are you ready, mother?" said the child; "God wants me to go there, don't he? and Ben's not going to get drunk, and he's going to have the kitten, and come and see me if the lady lets him, every time, aint he, mother? and Jack's a comin' a Sunday."

I told him he would be so happy there, and all the people were so kind; but I could see he was not thinking of himself, poor darling. Such an atom he looked; his beautiful head with its fair clustering curls so wonderfully out of place in that squalid, dirty-walled room, the tiny hands more than ever transparent, and a certain far-away look in the violet eyes, seemed to warn us that this little journey would be the last but one, and that other, which he must make without any of us—though, blessed be God, not alone—would soon follow.

With infinite tenderness, and with blinding tears, his mother arrayed the little fellow in what she could best spare. He could not be dressed, and had on his clean little bedgown before. I had brought a little velvet cap, which had been my own little brother's, and was glad to answer Tommy's eager question, "Mine to keep, lady?" in the affirmative.

He was quite spent, faint and throbbing in every pulse, when he reached Great Ormond Street, too exhausted to be amused with his wonderful ride. Soon the little weary body was tenderly laid in a clean white nest. The tall, capable young nurse inspired me, ignorant of nursing skill, with hope and confidence, and the offered beef-tea and few drops of brandy were readily swallowed by the almost fainting child, though I doubted if either myself or even his mother would have met with the same obedience. One of the ladies told us it was nearly always so even with nauseous and unsavoury medicines. Remembering various little home nursery scenes, I thought it a happy thing that it was so for all parties concerned.

And now my hopes were realised; and if it were God's will for my dear little friend to recover at all, surely, I thought, he will soon mend here. Mrs. Brunt, I saw, was quietly crying, poor thing, by the little cot, still very grateful and pleased with all round her. Little Tom put up his thin arm, and bid us good night, saying he was "so sleepy."

I thought it best for us all to go at once, so we told him to try and not mind not seeing his mother

when he awoke, and promised to come next day to see him, and then left the cheerful, happy ward. Poor mother, I felt very sorry for the loneliness she would find in the little miserable room, but we had so much to hope now for our dear "little un."

A week passed; the clever, kind physician who had undertaken Tommy's case spoke very gently and tenderly of him, but evidently was not very sanguine as to great results from his treatment, though Mrs. Brunt and Ben were both radiant with delight at dear Tommy's altered looks. And certainly soap and water, good food and better air, had made a wonderful difference. There were some dear little fellow-patients in that ward, and one boy of about ten was especially fond of and good to Tommy.

One afternoon, when I went in quietly, I found them hand-in-hand singing softly together, "I want to be an angel." We three finished the little hymn together, and I could but think Tommy's wish would, as far as may be, soon be realised. The nurse's report was, however, "Wonderfully better, miss, though the doctors don't think he'll ever be well; he has good nights, and is very happy and good." I talked to the darling child of "the bright land far away," and most sweet were the words of love and faith in the dear Saviour, who had so "revealed himself unto this baby child."

Every one seemed to love the dear boy, and his good nurse took all pains to keep him easy and comfortable.

Just at this time I was called upon to leave town for several weeks. I wrote to my little darling's nurse once about him, but did not send an address, so got no answer. In the evening of the day I returned to London I was told Ben wanted to see me.

The poor fellow burst into tears when he saw me, and fairly sobbed, "Oh, miss, our little un's goin'—goin' fast, he is, and he wants to see yer. I heard you was comin' back to-night, so I thought I'd call round; he won't live till the mornin', the doctor says."

I asked Ben to wait for me, and in an hour I was by the bedside of my little teacher and friend, so soon "to be an angel." I shall not easily forget that wonderful scene; I wish I could portray it as it appeared to me. A lovely moonlight September night; the fresh, well-aired rooms; just a glimmer of firelight; rows of white beds; the little patients in most cases asleep, with their toys round them, and in the graceful attitudes of childhood. An oil-lamp gave a soft light upon the bed we sought, and the children on either side were partitioned off by painted screens. The nurse stood at the cot's foot; on one side blind Jack and Mrs. Brunt. One of the ladies, with a sweet serious look upon her kind face, held Tom's tiny hand in hers.

There was no great difference perceptible to me in the little face and form, always unearthly in its wonderful delicate beauty. The darling knew my

voice when I bent over him, and gave me a loving look. I whispered a word or two of what we had so often talked about—our dear Lord Jesus, and his home in heaven; and I knew the little child understood—ah, how much better than I—but he spoke no word. At intervals he signed to his nurse for drink, or to be moved a little, and so two hours passed. The house surgeon came in, and spoke a few words softly to the lady nurse. As he was leaving, little Tom tried to say, "Good-bye, sir."

The farewell was kindly responded to, and the tender-hearted young house surgeon went away with tears in his eyes. At last I was summoned; it was getting late, and little darling Tommy was entering the valley of shadows, his poor little battles with pain and want nearly over. We could not tell what the dim eyes were seeing, only "in part," however, then, though before morning dawned the shadows had all departed, and the dear boy had gone to Paradise from the little hospital.

We laid him in a quiet corner of Highgate Cemetery, not far from the Convalescent Home, which the dear little boy, with many other sweet hopeful little fellows, had often talked of as a wonderful place, where he was soon going, and big Ben speaks very reverently of "going to see the little un."

The kind young nurse gave Mrs. Brunt the remains of little Tommy's toys, and these, with some curls of his golden hair, are her best earthly treasures.

I paid many visits to the dirty court, in which I had first found my child friend, and several other poor little sufferers have since been relieved in various ways at the hospital, but the sad part of all is to think of their return to their wretched, miserable, tainted dwellings. Still, it is a great thing for them to have even but a few weeks' kindness and teaching, for them to learn their little prayers and hymns, to hear gentle voices and kind words, and forget, as they are all most willing to do, I am sure, the bad words and hard threats to which many have been accustomed all their poor lives.

No prettier sight can be seen on earth than the prayer-times at the Children's Hospital; so touching, the little delicate shy girls, and the sweet, bright patient boys, all so trustful, so sure of being heard, happy and content in the present, in spite of suffering. Surely our Saviour has indeed "taken these little children," and "set them in the midst."

Another great blessing, too, that is worth considering, is the happy home for the young women employed as nurses and servants, which the hospital affords. All seem so good and happy, busy and kind, and no wonder, for it is surely a special work of love, tending and watching over those dear babies. Many children, who would but drag on a painful existence for years, get cured (under Almighty God) by the skill of the good doctors who give so much of their valuable time to this good

work, and who make the ailments and diseases of children their especial study; and many children, too, who would never perhaps get a sight of the lovely country or glorious sea, are made strong and happy (to grow up, we hope, better men and women) for a month or more of real fresh air.

Let us, one and all, try and do something, if but a little, for this good work. We are told *everything* is acceptable. Old furniture, linen of any kind, crockery, old clothes (boots and shoes especially), and, I need not say, toys, to amuse during the long days spent in bed. The text of the Hospital for Sick Children is, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

#### "THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

101. What punishment did Nebuchadnezzar inflict upon Zedekiah, King of Jerusalem? And in so doing he was unconsciously fulfilling a certain prophecy. What was it?

102. Why do we apply the term "Mount" to Calvary, whenever we speak of it; there being no authority in the Bible for calling it so?

103. Show that the Samaritans had a much clearer view of our Saviour's mission than the Jews.

104. Mention the occasions on which Christ was anointed.

#### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 320.

83. Exod. vi. 1. "With a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land."

84. 2 Kings ix. 11. "Wherefore came this *mad fellow* to thee?"

85. Exod. iv. 23. "If thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn."

86. Compare 1 Cor. xv. 54 with Isa. xxv. 8.

87. Ezek. xiv. 20. Noah, Daniel, and Job.

88. Isa. liiiii. 2. "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned."

89. Exod. xvii. 14. The destruction of Amalek.

90. Hosea xii. 13. "By a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved."

91. Rev. xxii. 12. "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be."

92. Gen. ii. 15. "The Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to *dress* it and to *keep* it."

93. Josh. i. 8. "The book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night." Ps. i. 2. "In his law doth he meditate day and night."

94. Compare Josh. x. 13 with Isa. xxxviii. 8.